LONDON-WEST MIDLANDS ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

Volume 5 | Technical Appendices

CFA24 | Birmingham Interchange and Chelmsley Wood

Baseline report (CH-001-024)

Cultural heritage

November 2013

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Department for Transport

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High Speed Two (HS2) Limited,
Eland House,
Bressenden Place,
London SW1E 5DU

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Appendix CH-001-024

Environmental topic:	Cultural heritage	CH
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1 Introduction

1.1 Structure of the cultural heritage appendices

1.1.1 The cultural heritage appendices for the Birmingham Interchange and Chelmsley Wood community forum area (CFA24) comprise:

- a baseline report (this appendix);
- a gazetteer of heritage assets (see Volume 5: Appendix CH-002-024);
- impact assessment tables (see Volume 5: Appendix CH-003-024); and
- survey reports (see Volume 5: Appendix CH-004-024).

1.1.2 Maps referred to throughout the cultural heritage appendices are contained in the Volume 5, Map Book cultural heritage.

1.2 Content and scope

1.2.1 This baseline provides part of the evidence base, along with Volume 5: Appendices CH-002-024, Appendix CH-003-024 and Appendix CH-004-024 against which the assessment of assets that may be affected by the land required for the construction and operation of the Proposed Scheme can be determined. It collates information about known and potential heritage assets from a variety of sources and presents a chronological description and discussion of the development of the study area, placing assets within their historical and archaeological context.

1.2.2 The baseline is structured as follows:

- section 1: provides introductory material relating to the scope of the assessment, study area and key data sources;
- section 2: provides background info on geology and topography;
- section 3: provides a chronological description of the archaeological and historical development of the area;
- section 4: provides an overview of the built heritage resource;
- section 5: relates to a map regression;
- section 6: provides a description of the historic landscape, including parks, gardens and important hedgerows;
- section 7: describes the archaeological character of the route. This is closely related to Volume 5: Appendix CH-003-024;
- section 8: provides an overview of archaeological understanding and potential; and
- section 9: provides information sources.

1.3 Study area

1.3.1 The Birmingham Interchange and Chelmsley Wood area lies within Warwickshire and the West Midlands District and comprises parts of the civil parishes of Solihull, Coleshill, Bickenhill and Great Packington.

1.3.2 All non-designated and designated assets within the land required for construction and within 500m of it have been detailed in this baseline assessment. In addition, designated heritage assets have been examined up to 2km either side of the boundary of land required for construction.

1.3.3 All identified assets are listed in Volume 5: Appendix CH-002-024 and shown on Maps CH-01-154 to 155a and CH-02-153 (Volume 5, Map Book cultural heritage).

1.4 Data sources

1.4.1 Sources examined as part of this baseline assessment include published secondary sources, cartographic sources, historic environment record (HER) data for non-designated heritage assets and English Heritage national heritage list (NHL) data for designated assets. A full list of published sources can be found in Section 9 of this appendix.

1.5 Surveys undertaken

1.5.1 The following surveys were undertaken as part of the environmental impact assessment (EIA) process:

- Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) survey of the majority of the Proposed Scheme and land around it (see Volume 5: Appendix CH-004-024);
- hyperspectural survey of the majority of the land around the Proposed Scheme (see Volume 5: Appendix CH-004-024);
- a programme of non-intrusive surveys including geophysical prospection (see Volume 5: Appendix CH-004-024); and
- site reconnaissance field inspections to review the setting of historic assets and the character and form of the historic landscape.

2 Geology, topography and landform

2.1.1 The study area is located within an area that is divided north to south by the M42 resulting in two distinctive areas. To the east, the area is predominantly rural with local sites of mineral extraction and the River Blythe. To the west are residential areas and a mixture of commercial and industrial activity associated with Birmingham Airport, the National Exhibition Centre (NEC) and Birmingham Business Park.

2.1.2 The study area extends from south-east of the A45 Coventry Road, Hampton-in-Arden, at its southern boundary, to the administrative boundary between Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC) and North Warwickshire Borough Council (NWBC), in close proximity to where the M42 intersects the M6, at its northern boundary. The area includes land within the parish of Chelmsley Wood and parts of the Bickenhill and Little Packington parishes.

2.1.3 The topography of the area is dominated by the floodplains of the River Blythe and Cole and related minor tributaries, which are associated with land generally below 80m above Ordnance Datum (AOD). The study area passes through an area of gently sloping land, with slightly higher ground to the west of the River Blythe, with the highest points in the vicinity of Diddington Hill and the A45 Coventry Road in the south. Between these runs the shallow valley of Hollywell Brook. Lower land in the north is associated with the River Cole. Natural slopes are typically in the gradient range of 1:40 to 1:60.

2.1.4 A number of key communication routes run through the study area and have helped to shape the development of the commercial and industrial areas, particularly in the 20th century. The Rugby to Birmingham line runs through the study area towards Birmingham New Street station with the Birmingham International station serving Birmingham Airport, another key transport hub. A number of roads traverse the study area, the principal routes including the A452 Chester Road, A45 Coventry Road, A446 Stonebridge Road, M42 and M6.

2.2 Geology

2.2.1 The main underlying solid geology consists of Mercia mudstone, which forms part of the Knowle Basin. Within this lie two areas of Arden sandstone, one directly south of the NEC and the other aligned north-east, south-west directly west of junction 6 of the M42.

2.2.2 This solid geology is overlain by a continuous cover of glacial deposits and alluvial superficial deposits. Most of the glacial deposits comprise sands and gravels, which form an extensive but now dissected deposit beneath the axis of the River Blythe valley. Fluvial and alluvial deposits are present across the lower parts of the river and stream valleys.

2.2.3 There are known areas of made ground identified within the study area, which are associated with infrastructure development, including material from the construction of the M42, earthworks associated with the dismantled Hampton-in-Arden to Shustoke line at Middle Bickenhill, excavated material from a balancing pond to the west of Middle Bickenhill Lane, a borrow pit from the construction of the M42 between the M42 and Middle Bickenhill Lane, and deposits to the west of the M42

associated with the construction of the NEC, Birmingham International station and Birmingham Airport.

2.3 Boreholes

2.3.1 A review was undertaken of historic boreholes and historic land use within the study area, with regard to potential for survival of palaeo-environmental remains, in particular within alluvial deposits within the valley bottom.

2.3.2 Four boreholes were identified with alluvium present, 1m directly beneath the existing ground level, which may contain palaeo-environmental potential. These deposits were located to the south of Birmingham International station and Birmingham Airport.

2.3.3 Analysis of geological mapping has also identified alluvium in the valley bottom at Hollywell Brook. Therefore, these deposits also have the potential to contain palaeo-environmental evidence.

2.4 Historic land use

2.4.1 Ground disturbance has been recorded throughout the study area from both historic land use and previous archaeological investigation, which has resulted in areas of negligible palaeo-environmental and archaeological potential.

2.4.2 Historic activity is noted by 17 landfill sites, two brickworks and nine pit sites. These historic sites are recorded at Meriden, Bickenhill, Marston Green, Chemlsely Wood and Coleshill, and are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Historic landfill and pit sites within the study area see Maps LQ01-68 to LQ01-66Site Details (Volume 5, Map Book land quality)

Site details	Size (ha)	National grid reference (NGR) (site centred)
Meriden:		
Landfill - The Somers, A452 Kenilworth Road	6.7	E422400, N282200
Pits (two) - The Somers, A452 Kenilworth Road	Size unknown	E422265, N282255; E422265, N282255
Bickenhill:		
Brickworks – Jackson's, A45 Coventry Road	37	E420600, N282500
Landfill - rear of Jackson's Brickworks, A45 Coventry Road	1.2	E420500, N282900
Landfill - Bickenhill Lane	0.2	E418300, N281700
Landfill - Glebe Farm, Catherine De Barnes Lane	1.1	E418300, N282300
Landfill - opposite Church Farm, Clock Lane	2.11	E418400, N282500
Landfill - Hargrave Farm, off A45 Coventry Road	6.6	E417800, N282800
Landfill - Corner Clock Lane	0.5	E418600, N282900
Landfill - Windbridge Nurseries, A45 Coventry Road	4.8	E419000, N283100
Landfill - Middle Bickenhill Lane	4	E420200, N284200
Landfill - Sports Ground, A45 Coventry Road	1.5	E417600, N282900
Brickworks – Middle Bickenhill	Unknown	E420577, N283057
Marston Green:		
Landfill - Bickenhill Lane	0.3	E418700, N284100
Landfill - Elmdon Trading Estate	0.2	E418400, N284200
Landfill - Bickenhill Road	4.6	E418100, N285400
Sand pit - Black Firs, Coleshill Heath Road	Unknown	E418615, N285717
Pit - Coleshill Heath, Blackfirs Lane	Unknown	E418696, N285345
Coleshill:		
Landfill - Brackenlands Farm, A452 Chester Road	7.5	E420000, N285200
Landfill (two) - Packington Lane	2.8; 2.8	E421200, N285900; E421200, N285900
Landfill - Coleshill Civic Amenity Site, Stonebridge Road, Little Packington	12.8	E420300, N286100
Pits (two) - Packington, A446 Stonebridge Road	Unknown	E420670, N285375; E420350, N286195
Pit - Coleshill Pool, A446 Stonebridge Road	Unknown	E419789, N286469
Chelmsley Wood:		
Pits (two) - Chelmsley Wood, Yorkminster Drive	Unknown	E418730, N287225; E418473, N287200

3 Archaeological and historical background

3.1 Early prehistory

3.1.1 Within the study area, early prehistoric activity is largely represented by artefact finds, such as stone axes, flint arrowheads and pottery from sand and gravel quarries, and from within river terraces[1]. A flint blade of possible Mesolithic date was found on a ploughed surface north of Denbigh Spinney, Bickenhill.

3.1.2 To the south-east of the study area is Waverley Wood Farm pit, near Bubbenhall. Whilst it lies 16km (10miles) away, it is one of the earliest archaeological sites in the country and is significant in understanding the early prehistoric activity of the area. It is broadly contemporary with other sites, from across the country such as Boxgrove, West Sussex, Southfleet Road, Kent and High Lodge, Suffolk. Quarry workers at Waverley Wood Farm have found teeth and bones of the straight-tusked elephant (Palaeoloxodon antiquus) and four handaxes, three of which were made of andesite. A salvage excavation followed these finds and confirmed, together with the mammalian evidence and stratigraphic sequences, the site dated to a pre-Anglian age. This site, therefore, forms part of the evidence for the earliest colonisation in Britain by human ancestors[2].

3.1.3 During the early prehistoric period and beyond, the study area was located within the Forest of Arden and was therefore densely wooded. The topography of the area, particularly on the higher ground at the centre of the study area represents an attractive site for early settlement, being near the watercourse of the River Blythe, but at sufficient height above the marshy, lower lying areas at 85m to 90m above Ordnance Datum (AOD). Despite this, the existence of the woodland would have made this an unattractive proposition for settlement due to the intensive labour required to clear the area. It would also have been unattractive for the first farming communities due to the clearance required, then the preparation the ground would require following clearance to make it suitable for farming. The amount of marl and clay pits and brick making works located in the lower-lying areas which may have been less wooded indicate a heavy, clay soil which would not have been suitable for early arable farming, particularly when more attractive farming land was available to the south, on higher, freely-draining soils.

3.1.4 The geology of the study area with the fluvial and alluvial deposits situated within the low-lying river valleys has the potential to mask earlier archaeological features. They have the potential to seal and preserve palaeo-environmental deposits which may be of archaeological interest and could provide environmental evidence for this early prehistoric period which is traditionally poorly represented.

[1] Buteux, S.T.E. and Lang, A.T.O. (2002) Lost but not forgotten: the Lower and Middle Palaeolithic occupation of the West Midlands. West Midlands Regional Research Framework for Archaeology, Seminar 1

[2] Roberts, M. B.; Gamble, C. S. and Bridgland, D. R. (1995) The Earliest Occupation of Europe: The British Isles in Roebroeks, W and van Kolfschoten, T. (eds.) The Earliest Occupation of Europe, 165-192. Leiden, Institute of Prehistory

3.2 Later prehistory

3.2.1 Within the wider landscape, river valleys and their tributaries are known for Bronze Age remains. It is likely that the valleys were being utilised by small groups of farmers for pasture, with the higher ground being wooded and interspersed with the occasional scattered settlement[3]. Evidence for Bronze Age settlement in Warwickshire and Solihull is limited, but does include three round-houses recorded at Barford[4] and two sites at Sharmer Farm, Leamington[5]. Within the study area, evidence for Bronze Age activity is limited to an axe-head that was found 100m south-west of Church Farm in Little Packington.

3.2.2 In the Iron Age period, the study area lay at the junction of three Iron Age tribal groups - the Corieltauvi to the east, the Cornovii to the north-west and the Dobunni to the south-west[6]. Aerial photography has provided evidence of enclosed settlements and hillforts within the West Midlands area, but no remains dating from this period have yet been found in the study area[7].

3.3 Romano-British AD43-410

3.3.1 The study area is located within an area that is bound by Ryknild Street, the Salt Way and the two military roads, Watling Street and the Fosse Way. Watling Street lies to the north and was one of the most important Roman military highways in Britain. It ran from Richborough on the Kentish coast in a westerly direction, through Mancetter towards the legionary fortress at Wroxeter[8]. To the west is Ryknild (Icknield) Street, which linked Metchley Roman Fort (now centred on Vincent Drive, Edgbaston) with Alcester to the south, and Wall and Watling Street to the north[9]. To the south is the highway known as the Salt Way after the main export from the Roman settlement at Salinae (Droitwich Spa). To the east is Fosse Way military highway; the road from Devon to Lincolnshire[10].

3.3.2 Directly north of the study area is the Romano-British fortified town of Mancetter and its vexillation fortress, built in the pre-Flavian period during the original conquest phase of Britain (pre-AD69). Vexillation fortresses are not well understood within the canon of Roman forts, however they are thought to have been built to house auxiliary units during the conquest phase. To the south is the Romano-British town of Alcester, located beside Ryknild Street in a loop of the River Arrow to the west of its confluence with the River Alne. Other minor settlements include Venonis (High Cross) to the north-east and Tiddington to the south[11].

[3] Palmer, S. (2007) Recent work on the Neolithic and Bronze Age in Warwickshire in Garwood, P (ed) 2007, The Undiscovered Country: the Earlier Prehistory of the West Midlands. Oxbow Publications
[4] Hingley, R. (1996) Prehistoric Warwickshire: a Review of the Evidence, Transactions for Birmingham & Warwickshire Archaeological Society 100, 1-24
[5] Barfield, L. & and Hodder, M. (1989) Burnt mounds in the West Midlands: surveys and excavations in Midlands prehistory, some recent and current researches into the prehistory of central England, Gibson, A. (ed), Br Archaeol Rep, Br Ser 204, Oxford, 89-201.
[6] Cunliffe, B. (1995) Iron Age Britain. BCA/English Heritage; Esmonde Cleary, S. (2011) The Romano-British Period: An Assessment, 127-147, in Watt, S. (ed) The Archaeology of the West Midlands, A Framework for Research. Oxbow; Hodder, M. (2004) Birmingham the Hidden History. Tempus and Woodall, J. (1990) The Book of Greater Solihull. Barracuda Books Ltd
[7] Hurst, D. (2002) Middle Bronze Age to late Iron Age Worcestershire. West Midlands Regional Research Framework for Archaeology, Seminar 2
[8] Roman-britain.org
[9] Margary, I. (1973) Roman Roads in Britain, Third Edition. Baker
[10] Roman-britain.org
[11] Ibid

3.3.3 Military activity is further represented by the Roman fort 'The Lunt' (Baginton, Coventry), which was occupied from AD60-64 to the mid-3rdcentury, and the Roman fort and settlement of Metchley. The Metchley site is occupied by two 1st century campaign forts, originally a large fort built AD 50/60s which was later replaced by a smaller fort in AD 60-80s[12]. Jones[13] noted five distinctive phases of the Metchley forts from AD 40/50s to the post-Roman period, which demonstrated extensive demilitarization of the West Midlands during the 2nd century.

3.3.4 No Romano-British activity is known within the study area; however, it is possible that as-yet undiscovered remains dating from this period may exist.

3.4 Early medieval 410-1066

3.4.1 In the early medieval period, kingdom boundaries are seen to correspond with late Iron Age land divisions. A frontier zone was seen across the central Avon Valley (directly south-east of the study area), which possibly represented the eastern boundary of the Dobunni and later formed the eastern boundary of the kingdom of the Hwicce[14]. The Hwicce kingdom extended over present Worcestershire (except its north-western extension), western Warwickshire and all of Gloucestershire, except the Forest of Dean[15].

3.4.2 Within the study area, early medieval settlement is demonstrated by place-name evidence. Packington means 'Paca's farm/settlement'; Bickenhill means 'pointed hill or Bica's hill'; Elmdon means 'elm-tree hill', Chelmsley (Wood) means 'enclosure of Coelmund' and Coleshill relates to the 'hill by the River Cole'[16].

3.4.3 Within the area of Park Farm the HER has recorded the site of the early medieval settlement of Hill Bickenhill (BIC032). The Domesday Survey of 1086 recorded two different settlements called 'Bickenhill' (Hill Bickenhill and Middle Bickenhill). These are recorded as being held by different individuals, Aelfric and Alweard, in the early medieval period. These two settlements are thought to be 'Hill Bickenhill' and 'Church Bickenhill', now Bickenhill[17]. Based on geological and topographic evidence, it has been argued that Hill Bickenhill was the first of the two Bickenhill settlements, but there is no documentary or archaeological evidence to support this. The suggested 6th century date is also unproven, although several settlements in the area were founded at this time[18].

3.4.4 Further early medieval activity is noted by an early transport route directly north of Middle Bickenhill. This is the old road and ford (BIC055) from Hampton-in-Arden to Coleshill, which crossed the Hollywell Brook by the Westaneford.

[12] Ibid
[13] Jones, A (2004) Roman Birmingham 2, Metchley Roman Forts, Excavation 1998 – 2000 & 2002, The Eastern & Southern Annexes and Other Investigations in (2004) Birmingham and Warwickshire Archaeological Society Transactions for 2004, Volume 108
[14] http://timetrail.warwickshire.gov.uk
[15] Hooke, D. (1998) The Landscape of Anglo-Saxon England. Leicester Uni Press
[16] Ekwall, E. (1960) The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names. Clarendon Press; Mills, D. (2011) A Dictionary of British Place-Names. OUP Oxford; Watts, V. (2011) The Cambridge Dictionary of English Place-Names. Cambridge UniversityUni Press; Dutton, J.G. (1980) Brief History of Chelmsley Wood. Chelmsley Local History Society and Gelling, M. (1997) Signposts to the Past: Place Names and the History of England (3rd edition). Phillimore
[17] Skipp, V.H.T. and Hastings, R.P. (1963) Discovering Bickenhill. Department of Extra-mural Studies, The University; Woodall, J. (1990) The Book of Greater Solihull. Barracuda Books Ltd
[18] Skipp et al, 1963

3.5 Medieval 1066-1540

3.5.1 At the time of the Domesday Survey (AD 1086), the county of Warwick was divided into ten hundreds. A hundred was a large administrative subdivision of land, which included Coleshill, the largest in the area and contained over 49 settlements. Within these settlements were Bickenhill (Hill Bickenhill and Church Bickenhill), Middle Bickenhill, Elmdon, Packington and Marston Green[19]; all of which were held by Thorkell or Turchill of Warwick[20].

3.5.2 The settlements at Hill Bickenhill and Middle Bickenhill continued from the medieval period. However, Hill Bickenhill declined as a settlement and by 1730, comprised just eight houses. By 1776, it had ceased to be a settlement when the Earl of Aylesford purchased the remaining messuage (dwelling house together with outbuildings, curtilage and adjacent land) and land at Park Farm[21]. In 2011, a geophysical survey was undertaken in the area of Park Farm prior to a planning application for an extraction site, but no remains of the Hill Bickenhill settlement were located[22].

3.5.3 In the Domesday Survey, the settlement of Elmdon was known as Elmedone and comprised half a hide (approximately 2.7ha) of land, with approximately 2ha of meadow and 200m of woodland[23]. This was a small village measuring 3km from north to south and just over a 1.6km in width at its widest point west to east[24].

3.5.4 In contrast, the manor of Packington was part of the large territorial holdings of the Augustinian priory of Kenilworth. It comprised approximately 195ha of land, two mills, approximately 4ha of meadow and 2.6km of woodland[25]. After the dissolution of Kenilworth Abbey in 1539, the land was acquired by the priory's former tenant John Fisher, steward to Ambrose Dudley, later earl of Warwick[26]. There is no mention of Little Packington in the Domesday Survey, but it was first referred to in 1235 as being held by Roger de Quency, Earl of Winchester. It was here, in the mid-12th century, that the parish Church of St. Bartholomew (BIC050) was built. It was a simple structure built of stone with a timber-framed bell-turret and spire; the church was largely rebuilt in 1879[27].

3.5.5 The manor of Marston (Green), then known as Merestone, had early medieval origins, like the settlement of Bickenhill[28]. In the 12th century, the manor was divided into two and re-named Marston Culy/Culey/Culi and Wavers Marston after their lords[29]. The former was centred on the present junctions of Alcott Lane and Station Road, and Marston Wavers was situated around the former mansion house of Marston Hall (BIC082)[30]. By 1830 Marston Culy was known as Marston Green[31].

[19] Styles, P. (ed), 1945, A History of the County of Warwick: Volume 3: Barlichway Hundred. Victoria County History
[20] Morris, J. (ed) 1976, Domesday Book: 23 Warwickshire. Phillimore
[21] Skipp et al, 1963
[22] Marsh, B. (2011) Geophysical Survey Report: Park Farm, Packington Estate, Solihull. Stratascan
[23] Morris, 1976
[24] Salzman, L.F. (ed) 1947, A History of the County of Warwick: Volume 4: Hemlingford Hundred. Victoria County History
[25] Morris, 1976
[26] Tyack, G. (1994) Warwickshire Country Houses. Phillimore
[27] Salzman, 1947
[28] Morris, 1976; Salzman, 1947
[29] Salzman, 1947
[30] Crawford, G.E. (2000) From Domesday to Millennium, Marston Green.
[31] Ibid

3.5.6 Directly 600m north of the study area is the settlement of Coleshill, which is listed in Domesday as a Royal manor and held by King William, previously held by King Edward. The greater portion of the manor was woodland, approximately 4,370ha, compared with only approximately 146ha of arable land. Chelmsley Wood (BIC091) was a part of this woodland together with Coleshill Heath and Kings Wood (Kingshurst)[32]. It is not certain when Coleshill, and thus Chelmsley Wood, ceased to be Royal property but by the mid-12th century, the de Clinton family became Lords of the Manor[33].

3.5.7 Throughout the medieval period, the de Clinton family were prominent in the history of Warwickshire. Not only were they Lords of the Manor of Coleshill, but directly associated with the building of Kenilworth Castle and the foundation of the abbey there. Shortly before the mid-14th century, Sir William de Clinton, Earl of Huntingdon, built Maxstoke Castle (still extant) and founded Maxstoke Priory, which is located just 780m north of the study area[34].

3.5.8 Within the medieval period, field and farming systems were areas of open-field cultivation, especially in north and west Warwickshire. In the lower Tame-Blythe valley, places such as Coleshill and Bickenhill had approximately 25% of their land in a regular three field system. These open field cores were surrounded by an irregular patchwork of small embanked and hedged fields, which were cleared from waste land. Some fields, however, were intermingled with the waste itself and varied in character from grazed pasture, through heathland and scrub, to high woodland. Pastoral farming was more important in this region with the resulting growth in population and villages from the expansion of the open field system[35]. A number of medieval field systems have been identified within the area through aerial photographic analysis (BIC034, BIC036 and BIC046).

3.5.9 The expansion of open field agriculture meant that a number of settlements found themselves lacking common pasture for their animals. This was especially so at Church Bickenhill and Middle Bickenhill. Stretching north into Coleshill lay a 400ha waste heathland, which had many uses that included grazing as well as for the provision of fuel. Part of this waste was Bickenhill Heath which was about 162ha in size and used for the grazing of sheep, cattle and horses. However, during the 17th century, it was divided under the Enclosure Act[36].

3.5.10 By the mid to later medieval period fewer stone castles were being erected and the motte and bailey castle, a fortified earthwork mound with an adjacent enclosed area (bailey) surrounded by a ditch, was largely abandoned in favour of the moated homesteads, the homes of a lesser feudal lord or free tenant[37] . Moated houses range from the fortified homes of the lesser aristocracy, built with corner towers and walls, gatehouses and broad surrounding moats, to a farmhouse and garden of a free tenant farmer[38]. The wealthier homes were seen as status symbols that had privacy and security, keeping out thieves and animals. Although these buildings often had a

[32] Dutton, 1980
[33] Holyoak, M.C. (undated) Around Chelmsley in Times Past. Countryside Publication
[34] Bird, V. (1977) A Short History of Warwickshire and Birmingham. Batsford; Duttin, 1980
[35] Slater, 1981
[36] Skipp, 1963
[37] Adkins, L. and Adkins, R. (1998) The Handbook of British Archaeology. Constable
[38] Slater, 1981

defensive element, this move towards the moated homestead and away from the remote, formidable motte and bailey and castle where the lords were physically separated from the surrounding lands represents a shift in thinking. Major defences were no longer required and the threat of invasion and attack, carried over fromt eh Norman conquest had receded.

3.5.11 Within the area, and especially in north-west Warwickshire, a high number of moated sites have been recorded, such as that 300m north-east of Diddington Farm, Great Packington (BIC008). From about 1450, moats began to be less fashionable and many sites were abandoned for new timber-framed farmhouses or stone mansions a short distance away[39].

3.6 Post medieval 1450-1901

3.6.1 In the 16th century, the Midlands area was well placed to take advantage of the growth in trade in manufactured commodities, which resulted in parishes becoming more populous. This growth was made possible by the development of crafts based on local raw materials. In Bickenhill, and in other parishes, families turned to work in building, furniture building, tile making, fulling and weaving, using local clay, wood and yarn[40].

3.6.2 By the mid-16th century, the old nobility in Warwickshire had collapsed and the dissolution of the monasteries led to an influx of new landowning gentlemen, such as John Fisher who built Packington Old Hall. By the time of the Civil War, the landed gentry had settled into a pattern of life that altered very little until the late 19th century. The wealth of Birmingham did not have a great effect on the landowning class of Warwickshire until the later 19th century, when the agricultural depression forced many established landowners to sell off parts, or sometimes all of their estates[41].

3.6.3 The 19th century waste and heathland enclosures of north Warwickshire created an orderly regulated landscape. Straight roads and rectangular fields formed a great swathe from Elmdon Heath to Coleshill Heath. Once the lands had been enclosed, pastures followed quickly and by 1800 Warwickshire was 'almost throughout a dairying county'[42]. However, by 1825, agricultural change saw the county convert to corn production. Agricultural improvements meant heathland was drained and water meadows were improved.

3.6.4 In Bickenhill, enclosure within the village happened between 1787 and 1824[43]. By 1839, many farms had become the supplier of corn and meat for the towns of Birmingham and Coventry[44]. Bickenhill was transferred to the parish of Solihull in 1874 and, by 1932, had incorporated the village of Elmdon[45].

3.6.5 Elmdon is referred to as a manor from at least 1256, but in the 17th century a dispute arose as to whether it had any right to such a description. Oral statements were taken

[39] Slater, 1981
[40] Rowlands, 1987
[41] Tyack, 1994
[42] Skipp, 1963; Slater, 1981
[43] Skipp, 1963
[44] Ibid
[45] Ibid

from various inhabitants, who unanimously believed it to be a separate parish and township in its own right[46]. In 1760, the estate of Elmdon (nearly 10,000ha) was bought by a Birmingham banker, Abraham Spooner who then demolished a previous Tudor hall and began rebuilding a contemporary classical styled hall in 1783. This was completed after his death in 1795 by his son, with the additions of an icehouse, extensive outbuildings and a walled garden that was reputedly known as the largest in the country. The remains of this survive in what is now the Elmdon Manor Local Nature Reserve. SMBC bought the Elmdon estate in 1930 and it was then used during World War II by the Home Guard. After the war, the hall's parkland was converted to a public park but the hall, due to neglect, was demolished in 1956[47].

3.6.6 The manor of Packington was acquired by John Fisher, steward to Ambrose Dudley, later earl of Warwick, in 1544. John Fisher died in 1571 and his son Clement inherited the estate. Clement expanded and enclosed the extant park and created a 200ha deer park (BIC018) for a herd of 300 fallow deer. Gardens were laid out and the building of Packington Old Hall was instructed, a half-timbered building encased in brickwork[48]. A 1651 inventory of the house revealed a 'matted gallery', hall, parlours, great chamber and other chambers like those found in any country house of that period[49]. Tyack[50] notes Dugdale's observation that "the house stood west of the lake known as Great Pool, a mile or so south-west of the vanished village of Great Packington".

3.6.7 Sir Clement Fisher was succeeded in 1683 by his nephew (another Sir Clement) and a new house was built (BIC021). Packington Hall was initially constructed in 1693, but was enlarged and completely re-cased by Matthew Brettingham (for the third Earl of Aylesford) in 1766. Brettingham was employed to remodel the late 17th century house in a more 'correct' Palladian manner[51].

3.6.8 The greatest advocate of the landscape garden was Lancelot 'Capability' Brown, and a number of Warwickshire landowners commissioned him to lay out their parks anew[52].In 1750, though still at the threshold of his career, Brown began the transformation of Packington Hall grounds. Surviving plans by Brown show that his contribution, however, was limited to the southern part of the park, and in particular the area around the two lakes[53]. Brown's initial ideas at Packington included the Hall Pool as a serpentine lake, two blocks of woodland to the south of the house and a new drive crossing the stream by a bridge. A later detailed plan of 1751 encompassed the whole southern part of the extended park, from the eastern end of the Great Pool to the west of Hall Pool. It was to be treated as a single entity made up of woodland, lawn and water, the invariable components of a brown landscape. Impressive ornamental buildings were proposed, including a new neo-Palladian lodge 'My Lady's Lodge' and a pedimented gate lodge; however, none of the structures were built. The area of park was then used in part as farmland and was bisected by a road, which until the end of the 18th century formed part of the main route from London to

[46] Salzman, 1947
[47] http://billdargue.jimdo.com/
[48] Cave, 1976; Pevsner, N. and Wedgwood, A. (1966) The Buildings of England: Warwickshire. Penguin; Tyack, 1994
[49] Tyack, G. (1998) Capability Brown and the making of the Packington Landscape. Warwickshire History, Volume X, No. 4
[50] Tyack, 1994
[51] Stroud, D. (1975) Capability Brown. Faber and Faber; Tyack, 1980
[52] Slater, 1981
[53] Tyack, 1994

Holyhead[54].despite this, the grounds of the hall remain an important landscape feature and setting for the hall.

3.6.9 To the east of Little Packington, and just outside the registered park boundary of Packington Hall, lies the scheduled structure of Little Packington Bridge (BIC058). The bridge carries the pedestrian track across the River Blythe but it formerly carried the main road from Meriden to Coleshill. The route was diverted by the fourth Earl of Aylesford of Packington Hall in 1761. The bridge was constructed in the 17th century and originally had four arches with two flood arches in the approach. A heavy flood in 1900 washed away all but the two flood arches and one main arch and the bridge was repaired in timber. Subsequently, the timber repairs to the bridge were replaced by a modern aluminium bridge which spans the river with only three of the original stone arches remaining. It is likely that this bridge was only ever utilised as a footbridge with the river being shallow enough at this point to have been forded. Indeed the ford is still in use today by farm vehicles linking School Lane. The many modern alterations and the replacement of the majority of the bridge span with a steel structure in the 1980s means that there is very little architectural value remaining with this asset. However, it remains an important feature of the estate.

3.6.10 In 1789, the old church of Great Packington was replaced with a church based on the style of one near Rome[55]. The Packington estate saw a new hothouse and greenhouse in 1802; formal terraces were constructed in 1812; and a vinery, peach house and mushroom house followed in 1813 - 1819. In 1820, numerous other changes followed; a new conservatory; the drive re-aligned; a new gate lodge; and the park boundary extended south towards the Birmingham-Coventry road, removing the former hamlet of Dyalls (or Dials) Green. Since then, no fundamental changes have been undertaken, with Packington house and grounds still remaining the home of the Earls of Aylesford[56].

3.6.11 Throughout the 19th century, the villages of Greater Solihull and Warwickshire remained rural, although they attracted a number of successful businessmen and their families who wanted to escape the 'smoke of Birmingham'. Rural conservation also depended on existing landowners who had extensive estates, such as Lord Aylesford who owned much of Bickenhill and the Alston family who owned much of Elmdon[57].

3.6.12 Within the post-medieval period, not all villages were dependent on an agricultural economy. In Little Packington, mineral extraction became the principal industry, whilst in Coleshill; local industry involved both mineral extraction and brick-production. This can be seen 300m east of the Bogs (BIC083), where marl was extracted for use as a fertiliser, and 500m north-east of Brickfield Farm, north-west of Coleshill Pool, where there are remnants of gravel pits and brick kilns (BIC084).

3.6.13 New turnpike roads helped improve travel and, along with coaching stages, helped establish local villages. The earliest stretches of road improved in Warwickshire were those running south-east to north-west across the county which were part of the national road network linking London, Birmingham, Shrewsbury, Chester, Liverpool

[54] Ibid
[55] Cave, 1976
[56] Tyack, 1998
[57] Woodall, J. (1990) The Book of Greater Solihull. Barracuda Books Ltd

and Holyhead[58]. Within the study area, a turnpike road and toll gate (BIC061) was constructed east of Bickenhill Common Farm, Great Packington, between 1726 and 1750.

3.6.14 The success of the Liverpool to Manchester railway, which opened in 1830, determined the importance that the railways had in contributing to the commercial vitality of the region. It was quickly acknowledged that the Midlands would benefit from its own railway system, marking the start of the struggle to establish the first line into Birmingham. Warwickshire occupied a critical position within this struggle, with many of the biggest names in railway development running through the county, namely the London and Birmingham railway and the Grand Junction railway, which subsequently amalgamated as part of the London and Northwest railway (LNWR), the Birmingham and Derby Junction railway and the Birmingham and Gloucester railway[59].

3.6.15 The London and Birmingham railway represented the first mainline railway to enter London, providing a link between the capital and the burgeoning industrial centre at Birmingham. An additional line ran into Birmingham from the east, known as the Birmingham and Derby Junction railway. The original plan was to provide a route from Derby to London, terminating at Hampton-in-Arden where trains could join the London and Birmingham railway into Birmingham, albeit from a separate station located to the north of the village. Agreements with the Midlands Counties Railway resulted in an abridged route with no branch line to Hampton-in-Arden being submitted to Parliament in 1836. The Birmingham and Derby Junction Railway Bill was passed and the 42 mile line opened in 1839; however, it was soon realised that the Midland Counties Railway had revoked their promise and submitted plans for their own branch line to Erewash Valley, in competition with the Birmingham and Derby Junction railway. The Birmingham and Derby Junction railway obtained a fresh bill in 1840 to open their Hampton Branch known as the Stonebridge railway (BIC030), which ran from Whiteacre to Hampton-in-Arden, with intermediate stations at Castle Bromwich, Water Orton and Coleshill and a terminus at Lawley Street, to the east of Curzon Street, Birmingham[60].

3.6.16 The arrival of the railway caused the transformation of many local villages, but especially Marston Green. In 1838, the London to Birmingham railway line from Rugby to Birmingham was laid through the village. Initially, the line was laid upon stone sleepers and it was suggested that material from the Hampton-in-Arden cutting could supply the embankment required for the Birmingham side of Marston Green. However, they were incorrect in their calculations and large quantities of sand had to be removed causing considerable damage to the fields adjoining the railway[61].

3.7 20th century/modern 1901-present

3.7.1 Within the study area, servicemen from World War I were provided with rehabilitation and care in the community. Located along Elmdon Road, an isolation hospital, locally known as the 'Tin Hospital', was built for the treatment of servicemen who had been

[58] Slater, 1981
[59] http://www.warwickshirerailways.com/index.htm
[60] Boynton, J.(2002). The London and Birmingham Railway Between Birmingham and Coventry
[61] Crawford, 2000

gassed in the trenches. It was later demolished to make way for the 'Shadow Factory' at Elmdon, which then became the bus division of Metro-Cammell and is now the Elmdon Trading Estate. In Berwicks Lane, a military hospital for wounded Canadian servicemen was built; this hospital was retained after the war and became 'Marston Green Maternity Hospital'. The buildings have since been demolished, now replaced with a housing development[62].

3.7.2 During the early part of World War II, rural villages engaged in activities to protect their communities. At Marston Green trenches were dug at many points around the village fields, supposedly to disrupt random landing of gliders and aircraft. Numerous bombs fell in the immediate locality, with three landing upon properties in the village. It was believed that the bombs which fell on Marston Green were most were probably intended for Elmdon Airport[63].

3.7.3 In the 1920s, some airline services were already flying from the primarily military aerodrome in Castle Bromwich[64]. In 1928, Birmingham City Council (BCC) decided Birmingham required a civil airport; however, the depression delayed these plans and it was not until five years later that plans were prepared which identified Elmdon as the preferred site. In 1935, a substantial piece of land was bought and four years later, the airport, known as 'Elmdon Airport', was officially opened[65]. At the outbreak of World War II, the airport was requisitioned by the Air Ministry and used as an elementary flying school and Fleet air arm by the RAF. It was also used for flight testing and as a delivery base for Stirling and Lancaster bombers. During this time the Air Ministry built two hard surface runways to replace the original grass strip[66].

3.7.4 Seven years after opening, and still under government control, the airport re-opened for civil flying. BCC took over responsibility again in 1960, when expansion of the airport began and it was re-named 'Birmingham Airport'[67]. Thus, the rural parish of Elmdon had been given over to the airport and its associated infrastructure. A terminal extension, known as the 'International Building' opened one year later and an extension to the main runway took place between 1967 and 1970. By the early 1970s, the airport handled one million passengers a year. To handle this increase in flights and passengers, the construction of a new airport terminal began on the other side of the runway in 1981 and opened three years later. By 1991, a second terminal, 'the Eurohub', was opened and became the first terminal in the world to combine domestic and international passengers. Nine years later, a £40 million terminal development provided new additional facilities, including a two-storey arrivals concourse. The provision of further facilities over the next four years enabled a capacity of over nine million people using the airport. This growth was highlighted in the Government's white paper 'The Future of Air Transport', which resulted in the agreed planning permission for an extension to the existing runway that is due to open in early 2014[68].

[62] Crawford, 2000
[63] Ibid
[64] Handley, 2009
[65] http://www.birminghamairport.co.uk/meta/about-us/history.aspx; Handley, M. (2009) Past, Present and Future: Birmingham's Airport and the Events that Shaped an Era. Tallis Associates LLP
[66] http://www.birminghamairport.co.uk/meta/about-us/history.aspx;
[67] Handley, 2009
[68] http://www.birminghamairport.co.uk/meta/about-us/history.aspx;

3.7.5 Until 1928, Marston Green was also a part of the Bickenhill parish, but then separated and united with the parish of St Giles at Sheldon. Prior to becoming part of the Solihull Metropolitan Borough (SMB), in 1974, the agricultural village of Marston Green was part of the Meriden Rural District. It was not until the inter-war years, however, that the village began to grow into a populous modern suburb[69]. Marston Green was built on a sand-capped ridge with streams on either side. In winter, until the brooks were deepened and culverted in the early 1950s, it became regularly isolated when extensive flooding closed the access to the village at Holly Land and at the bridges in Coleshill Road and Bickenhill Road[70]. The growth of Marston Green has now continued with the expansion of the nearby airport, the construction of the NEC, and amalgamation with the local housing estate at Chelmsley Wood[71].

3.7.6 In 1849, a temporary building was added to Bingley House in Birmingham, for the exhibition of 'The Manufacturers of Birmingham and Midlands Counties'. Due to the success of the exhibition and the presence of Prince Albert in 1850, a small permanent exhibition building, Bingley Hall, was built[72]. In 1964, plans were debated for the replacement of Bingley Hall; however, it was not until 1969 that plans were put forward to develop an area of 12ha in the vicinity of Birmingham Airport[73]. This site would incorporate the excellent communication systems of the area, next to Birmingham Airport, the railway line to London and Birmingham and adjacent to the A45 Coventry Road[74].

3.7.7 In 1971, planning permission was granted for the building of the NEC, which brought financial benefit to the local area[75]. In 2009, the NEC was re-named as the 'LG Arena' and a five year improvement programme began.

3.7.8 By the end of World War II, 3,000 homes in Birmingham had been destroyed. A programme of slum clearance which had begun in the early 1930s had to be halted to retain housing stock. Later redevelopment of Birmingham city centre produced further demand for new housing and so, in 1963, a decision was made to build a development to house over 50,000 people within Chelmsley Wood[76]. By 1973, the largest single housing development in Europe stretching from Castle Bromwich in the north to Marston Green in the south was built. However, whilst the estate was a development for Birmingham residents, most of the district came under the control of WCC until 1974, when it was then designated as part of SMBC[77].

[69] http://billdargue.jimdo.com/
[70] Crawford, 2000
[71] http://billdargue.jimdo.com/; Bird, V. (1977) A Short History of Warwickshire and Birmingham. Batsford; ave, L.F. (1976) Warwickshire Villages. Robert Hale and Company
[72] Mills, E.D. (1976) The National Exhibition Centre. Crosby Lockwood Staples
[73] Griffin, F. (Sir) (1984) The Birth of the National Exhibition Centre. Birmingham City Council
[74] Humphries, B. P. (1977) The Location and Impact of the National Exhibition Centre. Thesis, University of Manchester
[75] Ibid
[76] Chase, B. and Hird, N. (1973) An Introduction to the History of Chelmsley Wood. Warwickshire County Library
[77] Rowlands, 1987; Slater, 1981

4 Built heritage

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 This section provides baseline information relating to built heritage assets within the land required for construction, 250/500m study area and wider 2km study area. The section provides the following information:

- broad overview of the character and form of the settlement pattern within the area;
- detailed descriptions of all built heritage assets wholly or partially within the land required for construction; and
- detailed descriptions of key designated assets within the 500m study area.

4.1.2 Information on designated assets within the 2km study area, but outside of the 500m study area, can be found in the Gazetteer in Volume 5: Appendix CH-002-024 as can information on non-designated assets within the 500m study area.

4.2 Overview of settlement character

4.2.1 There are 28 listed buildings within the study area, one at Grade I, two at Grade II* and 25 at Grade II. Two of the buildings, Marston Hall (BIC082) and associated gatepiers (BIC081), were demolished in the 1980s as part of the expansion of Birmingham Airport and are not discussed here. Two of the listed buildings lie within the Bickenhill Conservation Area (BIC051), the only designated conservation area within the study area.

4.2.2 The character of the study area is split between the urban expansion of Birmingham to the west, and the rural landscape to the east. Much of the area to the east was formerly part of the Packington Estate, although outside the present park boundaries.

Built Heritage assets within the land required for construction

4.2.3 There is a single built heritage asset within the land required for construction.

Bickenhill Common Farm (BIC070)

4.2.4 Bickenhill Common Farm (BIC070) is not designated; however, despite alteration, the complex remains as evidence of 18th agricultural activity within the study area. The complex comprises 18th century outbuildings and 19th century farmhouse. The farm lies within an area of agricultural landscape which extends to the south. However, there is an appreciation of the urban expansion of Birmingham with the M42 encroaching on its historic setting.

The contribution setting makes to the significance of the asset

4.2.5 The immediate agricultural context surrounding Common Farm does contribute to its significance, allowing an appreciation of the relationship between the building and its landscape. However, this landscape has already been eroded by piecemeal development, including the establishment of the M42 and the NEC. While the understanding of the asset is retained, the appreciation of the significance of its setting is diminished.

4.3 Key built heritage assets within 500m of the land required for construction

4.3.1 Scattered within the study area are a number of Grade II listed farmhouses and timber framed residences which highlight the agricultural development of the area from the 16th to 19th century. These provide evidence for the transition from a working agricultural landscape with the gradual expansion of the urban area. There are good surviving examples of rural buildings which provide important evidence for the historic use of the land and the arrangement of small settlements. One example of this survives at Mill Farmhouse (Grade II; BIC019) to the west of Packington. The farmhouse dates to the early 18th century, orientated to the south, with views towards the A45 Coventry Road. To the rear of the property is a courtyard of former outbuildings, now converted to commercial units. Beyond this, the wider agricultural landscape is retained, providing an understanding of the link between the building and its setting, both aesthetically and functionally.

Park Farmhouse (BIC053)

4.3.2 Park Farmhouse (Grade II* BIC053) dates to the late 18th century and represents a good example of early Gothic architecture. The building is constructed from red brick and arranged over two storeys plus attic on a traditional 'U' plan. The house lies within established gardens to the north of the main farm complex with open agricultural land extending to the south and west. Directly to the south of the house is a collection of 19th century barns arranged around a courtyard, now converted to commercial use. These enhance the group value of the main house and form an important part of its setting.

The contribution setting makes to the significance of the asset

4.3.3 The A452 Chester Road lies to the east of the farm complex, but is well screened from it. To the west, the open fields follow the natural topography, falling away towards the NEC. Mature vegetation helps to blur this transition from open fields to urban development. The open fields contribute to the significance of the asset by enabling an understanding of the function of the farm. Removing this setting would remove the ability to appreciate its historic function.

Church of St Bartholomew (BIC050) and Rectory (BIC056)

Now in private ownership, the Grade II listed Church of St Bartholomew (BIC050) was divided from the Packington Estate with the construction of the Stonebridge railway. The church has its origins in the 12th century with surviving medieval fabric in the nave and chancel. The building was much altered in the 19th century, including the addition of the timber framed bell turret at the west end. The church lies in an isolated position away from the main settlement, alongside the Grade II listed Rectory (BIC056), which was added in the 18th century and substantially altered in the 19th century.

The contribution setting makes to the significance of the asset

4.3.4 The separation of the church from the main settlement of Little Packington has given it an isolated quality. Historically it is important as evidence for the movement of the

settlement; however, there are no tangible links between the two. As a group, each asset makes a positive contribution to the setting of the other.

4.4 Key designated built heritage assets beyond 500m of the land required for construction

Packington Park

4.4.1 The majority of the listed buildings within the study area, totalling 17, lie within the Packington Estate, a Grade II* registered historic park (BIC003) bordered by the A452 Chester Road to the west and the A45 Coventry Road to the south. The park includes two mansions, the 17th century Grade II* listed Packington Old Hall (located outside the study area), and the later, 18th century, Grade II* listed Packington Hall (BIC021).

4.4.2 Packington Hall is attributed to Sir Clement Fisher who made significant improvements to the park in the late 17th century, with substantial rebuilding in 1766 for the third Earl of Aylesford. It is of classical design with a symmetrical façade to the east arranged around a central portico. Its ashlar construction and monumental scale stands out from the surrounding parkland, as it was intended. The wealth of the family is also emphasised by the continuation of this grandeur in the associated outbuildings, particularly the Grade II listed stable block immediately adjacent to the hall (BIC023). Dating to the 1760s, the stable block represents a courtyard structure with decorative square corner towers. The east frontage follows the classical architecture of the main house with central entrance portico. Completing the group are the Grade II listed gatepiers to the right (BIC024) and left (BIC025) of the stable block and gates, gatepiers and wall adjoining Packington Hall (BIC020). The structures were designed by Matthew Brettingham in the late 18th century and provide cohesion to the group.

4.4.3 Contributing to the complex is the Grade II listed garden terrace (BIC022), added in the early 19th century. The terrace includes a red ashlar wall with steps leading down to the west, allowing clear views across Hall Pool. The Grade II kitchen garden wall (BIC028) to the north is more utilitarian in function and earlier in date being late 18th century and executed in red brick to complement the hall.

4.4.4 Within the grounds of the hall are a number of listed structures associated with the formal layout of the park in the 18th century by Lancelot Brown. As part of these works, large lakes were established to the south of the new hall to create a picturesque landscape. A number of structures were added to enable the appreciation of the designed grounds; including the Grade II listed sandstone bridge (BIC014) at the east end of Hall Pool, alongside the Spring Head (BIC015) and grotto (BIC013). A second footbridge was added across Hall Pool in the mid-19th century in contrasting wrought iron (BIC016).

4.4.5 More functional structures exist at the main entrances to the park, including a number of listed lodges, providing evidence of the extent of the former parkland. Three are located at the southern entrance to the park, one positioned on the A45 Birmingham Road, with the remaining two flanking the former southern avenue approach (BIC007, BIC009 and BOC010). The northern examples follow the architecture of the main hall, being in sandstone ashlar with classical detailing. Although of the same date, the southern pair is in contrasting stuccoed brick with low pyramidal roof, flanking wrought iron gates added in the early 20th century. Located to the west of the lodges

are the former Grade II kennels (BIC011). The kennels were added in the mid-18th century and set apart from the main parkland, within Little Dayhouse Wood. A fourth lodge (Benton's Lodge; Grade II; BIC029) survives to the north, providing entry to the new hall complex.

The contribution setting makes to the significance of the asset

4.4.6 Packington Estate represents a comprehensive group of buildings which reflects the prolonged historic development of the park. Each structure contributes to the significance of the estate and should not be seen in isolation. Likewise, the setting of the structures is defined by their relationship to the park and each other, with their significance increased by their contribution to the wider estate.

Bickenhill Conservation Area

4.4.7 Also located within the study area is Bickenhill Conservation Area (BIC167). The area is situated to the south of Birmingham Airport, but despite this proximity, the village retains its rural character with continued emphasis on its agricultural setting. The built environment is characterised by substantial detached properties, arranged within large gardens. The position of the buildings set back from the street enhances the rural appearance of the village with large expanses of green space. The buildings themselves represent an eclectic mix of architectural styles and plan form. The majority date from the Georgian and Victorian periods, including a number of farmhouses located on the edge of the settlement. A good example is the Grade II listed Grange Farmhouse (BIC054) which, although attributed to the 19th century, is likely to contain earlier, timber-framed fabric. Forming a dominant landmark within the village is the Grade I listed Church of St Peter (BIC057). The church retains fabric from the 12th century, with subsequent extension in the 14th and 15th centuries; however, it is the 17th century spire which rises above the village skyline, giving the church is prominence which extends beyond the village boundaries. The isolation of the church is reinforced by the absence of any inter visibility with other church structures within the wider landscape.

The contribution setting makes to the significance of the asset

4.4.8 Beyond the conservation area the landscape continues as open agricultural fields before encountering the M42 to the east and Birmingham Airport to the north. Despite the proximity of the motorway and the airport, the conservation area retains a sense of place as a small rural settlement. The individual buildings contribute to this character through the retention of large gardens and expansive spatial arrangement. The village has also resisted modern development, enhancing the cohesion of historic buildings.

5 Historic map regression

5.1.1 The 1610 John Speed map shows the settlement of Bickenhill and the estate at Great Packington. The estate is shown as an enclosed, emparked space with the manor house in the centre. The River Blythe is also shown, marked here as Blythe flu. The first small scale map available for this area is the 1789 map of the Aylesford Estate[78]. The Earls of Aylesford were and still are one of the major landowners in this area, with their seat at Packington Hall. The 1789 plan shows in detail the village of Meriden with the portion of the map within the study area entirely occupied by the Packington Estate.

5.1.2 The village of Hill Bickenhill was under the ownership of the Earls of Aylesford and a plan of 1793[79] shows the layout of the settlement. The plan covers the central part of the study area including the farmstead of Park Farm which is shown to the west of the main road, later known as the Old Chester Road running from north-west to south-east through the study area. The fields surrounding Park Farm are labelled as Highway Close, Marlpit Close and Rickyard Close and there are a number of ponds shown on the map which are indicative of marl extraction. There are two fields labelled as Warren indicating that the area may have been used for the breeding and hunting of rabbits. To the north of Park Farm, the land is no longer divided into fields, but is instead labelled as Heath Land. It is possible that Common Farm is shown in the northern extent of the map, abutting the Old Chester Road and an unlabelled boundary; although the building is not labelled. To the east of Park Farm and the Old Chester Road are three small ponds aligned in a row. The remains of two of these ponds are still visible today.

5.1.3 A map published in 1835[80] showing the line of the proposed Stonebridge Railway running through the study area is of particular interest as the survey was directed and signed by George Stephenson. The plan clearly shows a schematic idea of the line as it is represented as a line cutting through the countryside, with no regard for local topography or land conditions. The finished line, although following broadly the same route, takes account of the local topography. The survey demonstrates the line branching from the London, Midland and Scottish Railway to the south-east of Hampton-in-Arden, moving north-east between Diddington Farm and Diddington Lane, and passing Stonebridge on the west before crossing the River Blythe twice, continuing and Packington Estate and into Little Packington. The engineering costs for this route must have been high, particular with the necessity of constructing two bridges across the River Blythe. The line as constructed bypassed this problem by shifting the route west to avoid both the formal parkland of the Packington Estate and the River Blythe. In the end, the route branched off the London and Birmingham railway to the north of Hampton-Hampton-in-Arden and went to the west of Diddington Lane. The line entered the study area cutting through the A45 Coventry Road, to the east of Middle Bickenhill before moving north-west to Little Packington and the ultimate terminus at Whitacre.

[78] Ayleford Estate 1789
[79] Plan of Bickenhill Aylesford Estate 1793
[80] Plan of Bickenhill and London to Birmingham Railway 1835

5.1.4 The Ordnance Survey (OS) map of 1887 shows that in general terms, the study area is largely unchanged; however, there are some significant changes worth noting. Hill Bickenhill is no longer marked on the map. Park Farm is labelled in the general location of the old settlement, but its status as a village seems to have been dropped. Middle Bickenhill is labelled to the south-west, though only a handful of buildings are depicted. A major addition to the landscape is the arrival of the railways. The Whitacre and Hampton Branch of the Midland railway, also known as Stonebridge railway is shown cutting though the study area from south-west to north-east. The line cuts under the Old Chester Road and runs just to the west of the Packington Estate, between the edge of the parkland and the River Blythe and the settlement at Little Packington. Another railway is shown at the western extent of the study area, the Rugby to Birmingham branch of the London and North West Railway, which runs in a north-westerly direction towards Birmingham city centre. Apart from the railways, the study area remains largely unchanged. It is still entirely rural with scattered isolated farmsteads. Coleshill Heath is still shown as an undeveloped area with only a small number of farmsteads.

5.1.5 At the very northern part of the study area, an unusually shaped area of ponds and woodland is depicted. This area contains Coleshill Pool to the west and an area labelled as The Bogs to the north, which, together with adjacent field boundaries, forms an approximate oval shape but does not meet at the south. The origin of this unusually shaped area of land is not known. It is too large to be a moated site or other form of enclosure. The remnants of blocks of woodland within the circumference of the oval and the general size and shape of the area enclosed, along with the proximity to the manors of Packington, Hampton-in-Arden and Coleshill indicates that this area may have been set aside as a deer park. The shape is similar to other deer parks found across England and the unusual shape which has been preserved by field boundaries could have arisen from the bank and possible ditches or fences which were used to enclose the park. The existence of Coleshill Pool also supports this theory, in particular if it was formed from infilling the western ditch surrounding the park, gradually becoming misshapen with re-cutting of the pool edge.

5.1.6 The 1905 OS map once again shows very little substantive change within the study area. There is a small increase in the number of buildings shown at Middle Bickenhill and a large pit is shown to the north of Hollywell Brook Rough, south of the railway. Further north, the area of Coleshill Heath shows an increased number of small ponds indicating that localised mineral extraction was continuing to take place. A farm building unlabelled on the previous map to the east of the crossroads on Coleshill Heath is now labelled as Brickfield Farm. Within the area identified as a deer park, the amount of woodland has increased with the central portion now labelled New Plantation.

5.1.7 The only substantive change shown on the 1938 OS mapping is the upgrading of Old Chester Road to become the A452 Chester Road. As the road moves north-west from Stonebridge, it appears to have been placed within a cutting and the roads around Stonebridge have also been reordered. Other than this, there are no further changes of note. There are more noteworthy changes within the local landscape shown on the mapping from the 1950s. At the very southern end of the study area, the brick works located at the apex of the Stonebridge or Whitacre and Hampton branch line and the

A45 Coventry Road has expanded massively from a small industry with only three buildings and a small extraction area to a number of extraction areas with a number of large buildings to process much larger quantities of the extracted clay. Localised change has occurred around Park Farm where a small number of buildings have appeared to the west of the main farm complex. These buildings are not labelled. Additional road improvements have been made to the A452 Chester Road where the junction between this road and the A446 Stonebridge Road has been upgraded and slip roads have been added for increased traffic safety and accessibility. Further north there have been a number of substantial additions to the landscape. To the east of the A446 Stonebridge Road, a large sand and gravel works has appeared and a large area of land has been quarried out. To the west of the A452 Chester Road, the area formerly labelled as Coleshill Heath now contains a burgeoning housing estate labelled as Coleshill Heath. A number of houses have been constructed lining the roads and two hospitals have been built in the western portion of the study area. A number of houses have also been built to the south of Blackfirs Lane.

5.1.8 The mapping from the 1960s is not complete for the southern portion of the study area. In the northern portion, sand and gravel works have continued to expand with further areas quarried and others possibly reinstated. The evidence for the reinstatement is the large areas of marshland which were often created following the infill and reinstatement of quarried areas which were not shown on previous editions. In addition, a large roundabout has been constructed to the north of Pool Wood, on the former Stourbridge Road, now the A446 Stonebridge Road, although no additional roads have been constructed leading off the roundabout at the time of the survey for this mapping series.

5.1.9 The 1970s mapping depicts the southern portion of the study area, but not the northern portion. The main changes are to the road network in the area. At the Stonebridge crossroads, a large roundabout has been constructed which necessitated the demolition of the Stonebridge Hotel. The junction between the A446 Stonebridge Road and the A452 Chester Road has also continued to be upgraded with an overbridge constructed to carry the southbound carriageway of the A452 Chester Road over the slip road from the A446 Stonebridge Road. The line of the Stonebridge railway is now marked as dismantled.

5.1.10 Mapping from the 1980s shows a major change in the landscape of the study area. The NEC has been constructed to the west of Middle Bickenhill, accompanied by a number of ancillary structures, warehouses, car parks and landscaping. A new railway station has also been constructed to serve the centre. The development of this large complex involved the complete restructuring and reshaping of the landscape around this area. The A45 Coventry Road has been upgraded and a number of slip roads have been constructed the A45 from it to link with car parks at the NEC. The M42 was also constructed in the 1970s but the 1980s mapping shows additional roundabouts at junctions, including the junction with the A452 Chester Road. To the east of the A446 Stonebridge Road, the former sand and gravel works has been subsumed into a massive area marked as a refuse tip, later the Little Packington Landfill. The area occupied by this refuse tip stretches from the A446 Stonebridge Road in the west to Packington Road in the east. This map also shows the massive increase in the size of the settlement formerly labelled as Coleshill Heath, but now absorbed into the

expansion of Chelmsley Wood. The form of the original 1950s houses along the roads in Coleshill Heath can still be seen, but the land to the north-west of this has been entirely developed with housing, civic and municipal buildings. At the very north of the study area, the roundabout seen on previous map editions now joins up the M6, another new addition to the area, with the A446 Stonebridge Road and there is a large junction linking the M42 with the M6 at the northern point of the study area. All of these new constructions occupy a considerable footprint within the study area and totally transform the landscape from a largely rural, open agricultural landscape to one dominated by a transport corridor and development on an industrial scale.

5.1.11 The most up to date mapping shows the continued expansion of the NEC to include hotels and many more car parks and the growth of the Birmingham Business Park to the north which has infilled the previous open space between the M42 and the urban conurbation of Chelmsley Wood.

5.1.12 The historic map analysis for this study area has shown how the area remained largely rural with an agricultural economy supplemented by gravel, sand and clay extraction. This altered in the latter half of the 20th century with the arrival of industrial scale mineral extraction, major transport networks and the NEC. Despite this, the rural elements of this landscape are still visible on modern mapping, particularly around Middle Bickenhill, Park Farm and within the Packington Estate.

6 Historic landscape

6.1 Historic landscape characterisation

6.1.1 The Solihull Historic Environment Record has undertaken an historic landscape characterisation which covers this study area. This has characterised the existing landscape into broad character types and individual units, allowing areas of surviving historic landscape to be identified and informs the following discussion.

6.1.2 This study area lies within national character area 97: Arden, as identified by Natural England (NE), within the more heavily urbanised parts of the Arden landscape. The area is predominantly urban in nature with large scale industrial and commercial developments sitting alongside smaller pockets of rural landscape. Linear infrastructure is also a feature of the study area with the junction of the M6, M6 Toll and M42 dominating the north-western portion of the study area and the M6, A452 Chester Road and A446 Stonebridge Road running through. The more urbanised and remaining rural sections of the landscape are roughly divided by the route of the M42 with the settlements of Chelmsley Wood and Marston Green and the NEC sited to the west of the carriageway and the open fields of Middle Bickenhill and Common Farm and the registered park and garden of Packington Hall lying to the east. The rural areas retain elements of planned enclosure resulting from the 1818 Act of Parliament in this eastern area with sections of plantation and marshland near The Bogs Farm. The open area of designed landscape within the boundaries of the Grade II* registered park of Packington Hall in the eastern part of the study area provides an area of unaltered landscape within this heavily altered zone. Industrial activity does punctuate the more rural, open landscape to the west with the quarry site near Park Farm and the landfill site at Little Packington situated to the east of the A452 Chester Road.

6.1.3 The study area once lay wholly within the Forest of Arden. The heavily wooded nature of this landscape has meant that traditionally it has seen low populations and low density of settlement. Throughout the prehistoric and Roman periods, settlement in this area was rare due to the heavy woodland and the clearances which would have been required. The first noticeable alteration of the landscape occurred in the early medieval period with the emergence of large market towns such as Warwick. The establishment of these larger towns would have increased the local population, putting pressure on the food supply leading to an increase in demand for agricultural land. Therefore from the early medieval period onwards the woodlands began to be cleared to provide timber for construction and then land for arable and pasture.

6.1.4 The initial clearances did not represent a substantial reduction in the area of woodland. At the time of the Domesday Survey (1086), 35% of north-west Warwickshire was wooded[81]. All of the villages recorded in Domesday that fall within the study area are listed as containing woodland, in some cases substantial areas. For example, Bickenhill (either Hill or Middle) is recorded as containing woodland 12 furlongs long and six broad. With a furlong measuring approximately 4.8km(three miles), this means Bickenhill contained 1,678 square km (648 square miles) of woodland, or an area 57km (36 miles) long and 28km (18 miles) broad.

[81] The Conservation Studio (2011) Berkswell Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Proposals. Unpublished report.

6.1.5 By the 12thcentury, manorial deer parks and estate parkland began to be established within the study area, for example at Packington and Coleshill. Deeds dating from the 13th century provide evidence for assarting (woodland clearance) in the Bickenhill manors including Hill Bickenhill and Bickenhill. The earliest deed dates to 1240 and indicates that the population was rising and areas for agricultural use were required[82]. The scattered farmsteads such as Common Farm, Park Farm, Church Farm and The Bogs Farm which remain in the landscape today are evidence of the increasing agricultural use of the land throughout the medieval and post-medieval periods. In the absence of large scale preservation of ridge and furrow in this area due to modern development, these farmsteads help to provide an understanding of how this landscape was utilised.

6.1.6 Evidence of the former woodland coverage of this landscape is retained in pockets throughout the study area. One of the main examples of the retention of woodland is in the six areas of designated ancient woodland which remain. Three areas of ancient woodland remain to the north of Brook Farm, to the east of the Packington landfill site. These three areas are called Bannerly Rough, Todd's Rough and Birch Wood and are all areas designated as ancient and semi-natural woodland and were therefore in existence since 1600. At the very south of the study area, there is another area of ancient woodland called The Somers located to the north of Hampton Lane, west of a former sand and gravel pit. This is an area of replanted ancient woodland indicating that the woodland itself is not ancient but it has been planted on the site of an area of ancient woodland, thus preserving this historic landscape feature. The remainder of the ancient woodland is located in the urban conurbation of Chelmsley Wood. School Rough is located directly to the south of Bickenhill Road and Alcott Wood is located in the apex of two roads, Moorend Avenue and Gloucester Way. Both are areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland.

6.1.7 Historically, this area was a landscape of woodland, heath and common land. The larger commons were enclosed as can be seen by the straight field boundaries and rectilinear patterns, though some remnants of smaller commons and older landscapes do remain, characterised by small, irregular fields and winding track-ways. The first enclosure of the fields and commons began in the 18th century although century the open fields of the Blythe Valley within the study area were enclosed during the 19th century. It has been shown that woodland clearances took place within the study area from the medieval period onwards, but areas of woodland do survive. In the northern portion of the study area lies Coleshill Pool within woodland plantation. Adjacent to this is The Bogs Farm, a pre-1888 farm complex. The name of The Bogs Farm and the extant Coleshill Pool along with Pool Farm situated to the north of the study area indicates that this area has traditionally been waterlogged and marshland. The area is fairly flat and the heavy clay of the soils still makes drainage an issue. The historic OS mapping of the late 19th century shows this area as woodland plantation and the continuation and maintenance of this area for woodland indicates that it is not a suitable or desirable place for settlement. It can be said therefore that this area preserves the historic landscape and land use, though the construction of junction 4/7a respectively at the M6 and M42 intersection has removed some elements of this.

[82] Scott Wilson (2005) Birmingham International Airport Master Plan Review

6.1.8 The 1793 plan of the Bickenhill estate shows the area of land to the west of the River Blythe, either side of the A452 Chester Road around Park Farm. The plan serves to illustrate the loss of field boundaries which has taken place in this area, not only through mineral extraction, but also through the removal of field boundaries to create large, open spaces. The plan shows the area to the north of Park Farm as Heath Land with very large fields created. There are also a small number of fields labelled as Warren indicating their use as a rabbit hunting and breeding ground, possibly used by the Earls of Aylesford. The fields around Park Farm are labelled as Large Castle Croft and Small Castle Croft but there is no indication of why these fields are named as such, for example no moated sites are labelled but it may be a former moated site that is no longer extant. The other field names demonstrate localised industry, for example Marlpit Close. The settlement of Middle Bickenhill is shown as a two buildings with an orchard to the south. The historic core of the settlement dates from the post-medieval period when the settlement to the north, around Park Farm was abandoned. The pattern of isolated settlements and farmsteads established in the early medieval and medieval period is difficult to appreciate within the study area. Although, as demonstrated by the historic landscape characterisation, there are isolated survivals, the majority have been removed by modern development or have simply shrunk when the population decreased, as in the case of Hill Bickenhill, near Park Farm.

6.1.9 The largest area of surviving medieval to post-medieval character relates to piecemeal enclosure. This section, in the centre of the study area, identifies the site of the medieval settlement of Hill Bickenhill. However, a large portion of this area near to Park Farm has been removed by quarrying activity. This has removed the largest concentration of historic hedgerows within the study area. To the north of this is Park Farm. There are further remnants of medieval and post-medieval landscapes to the south of the Packington landfill site in the form of large irregular fields possibly connected to the medieval settlement of Little Packington.

6.1.10 The 1839 tithe map of Bickenhill attests to the continued wealth of the Aylesford family as the majority of land parcels are owned by the Earl of Aylesford, with the majority of land tenanted. The tithe map also shows that although many of the field boundaries have been removed by modern development, areas of the landscape depicted on this map do survive to the east of Middle Bickenhill and to the west of Denbigh Corner. The Tithe Apportionment demonstrates that the area of land between the M42 and A452 Chester Road west of Denbigh Corner and south of Common Farm is still heathland, labelled as Coleshill Heath and has been further divided with field boundaries during the time of enclosure in the early 19th century.

6.1.11 Although a number of turnpike roads and other routes were in existence within the study area from the post-medieval period onwards, the 19th century also saw the arrival of large-scale communication routes such as the Stonebridge railway. This ran through the study area from south-west to north-east, cutting through Middle Bickenhill, forming part of the Birmingham and Derby Junction line which opened in 1839. Further to the west was the already extant London to Birmingham Railway which railway opened the year before. Both railways would have represented a major change in the landscape of the area, providing the catalyst for the changes and development which went on to remove much of its historic legibility. The study area did escape much of the industrialisation of the landscape initiated by the coal

extraction industry in the 19th and 20th centuries; however, it was subsequently found to be rich in sands and gravels.

6.1.12 To the east of the M42, adjacent to Little Packington, was a large sand and gravel extraction pit which is now a landfill site, raised above the ground and dominating the surrounding area. In 2012, planning permission was granted for a sand and gravel quarry at Park Farm situated to the east of Middle Bickenhill[83].The extraction activity related to this removed a large proportion of the remaining historic hedgerows and historic landscape within the study area. Small scale extraction, marl pits and gravel pits are shown on the tithe maps and early mapping of the area indicating that although the scale of the workings has vastly expanded, the tradition of industrial work in this landscape can be traced back many centuries.

6.1.13 The 20th century saw a massive expansion in the development in the road network with the creation of the M42, the A452 Chester Road and the extensive associated infrastructure. The NEC was constructed in 1976 to the west of the M42 and a number of ancillary buildings and car parks have been constructed in the vicinity giving the area a heavily urbanised aspect.

6.1.14 In conclusion, modern development within the northern portion of the study area has eroded the historic legibility of the landscape. Remnants of historic landscape features exist around the study area, particularly to the south and the consideration that these historic landscape elements contain features of heritage significance has been factored in to the archaeological character areas in Section 7.

6.2 Historic parks and gardens

6.2.1 There is one registered park and garden within the study area. The Grade II* listed Packington Hall (BIC003) of which only a very small portion of the southern part of the estate extends within the study area boundary. The park was subject to remodelling after plans by Lancelot Brown and in the late 18th and 19th centuries were updated to include picturesque elements. The park covers an area of 275ha, with 12ha of this comprising the formal pleasure grounds and walled garden and the remainder making up the surrounding parkland.

6.2.2 Prior to the establishment of the park and garden, the manor of Packington belonged to Kenilworth Priory. Following the dissolution of the monasteries the manor was purchased by the priory's tenant John Fisher who built a house at Packington possibly near to the site of the current mansion. Fisher's son, Clement inherited the estate in the 17th century and enclosed the park. Clement, who was knighted prior to his death, was succeeded by his son Robert in 1619 who was created a baronet in 1622. Robert undertook a scheme of improvements to the park including the excavation of the Great Pool, and these improvements were continued by Robert's son, Clement. Sir Clement, the second baron, created the formal gardens in the mid-1660s and extended the park. In 1693, the 16th century house was rebuilt and this building forms the core of the present mansion. At the same time, further improvements were made to the grounds including the insertion of canals, statues, vistas and other ornamental features.

[83] Solihull Council Planning Application Reference - 2011/1959

6.2.3 In 1729, the estate passed from the Fisher family through marriage to the Finch family, the Earls of Aylesford. Heneage Finch passed the estate to his son, Lord Guernsey, and, through a large dowry provided by his marriage to the daughter of the Duke of Somerset, made many improvements to the estate including the construction of a cascade and alterations to the pool. During these improvement works, Lord Guernsey consulted with Sanderson Miller of Radway Grange who had provided landscape advice to a number of estates throughout Warwickshire. In 1748, Lord Guernsey contacted Lancelot Brown who was working on several nearby estates including Warwick Castle. An initial sketch plan was produced in 1750, and a further plan produced in 1751 which shows designs for a new lake to be created from existing fish and mill ponds, the construction of a triple-arched bridge and a grotto. Most of the proposals were implemented in the long term, though some of the buildings were never constructed. The mansion was enlarged once again in the late 18th century by the third Earl of Aylesford, at which time the road from London to Holyhead, which originally ran to the east of the hall to outside of the park, was diverted to run around the northern boundary of the estate. The fourth Earl commissioned Joseph Bonomi to make further alterations to the hall and to rebuild the parish church in 1789. The park and pleasure ground were developed in the late 18th and early 19th century in a picturesque style. The estate has been through a number of additions, including the addition of the south and west terraces and remains today within the ownership of the Aylesford family.

6.2.4 The principal elements within the park are Packington Hall, the pleasure grounds located to the south and west of the hall including the terrace, Hall Pool and a number of herbaceous borders. To the north of the pleasure grounds lie the kitchen gardens, enclosed by 18th century walls and containing numerous fruit trees, a peach house, two vineries and a mushroom house. The parkland lies to the south-west, south, north and east of the Hall containing a deer herd and a golf course. The park also contains the large Great Pool which is connected to the Hall Pool and a further pool, Park Pool is located in the northern portion of the park.

6.2.5 A number of views can be had within the boundary of the park; however, the topography of the surrounding landscape means that there are limited long distance views beyond the boundaries. One designed view is aligned on the southern façade of the hall where an avenue is formed by trees. A carriage drive from the 18th century also runs through the park, starting to the south-west and running through Mill Shrubbery and below the west end of Hall Pool terminating to the west of the hall. The avenue offers views to the west across the River Blythe and the meadows. Other significant views offered from the park can be had from the pleasure grounds and Hall Pool where there are views towards Little Packington and views to the south-east towards the A45 Coventry Road and Packington Lane. The principal entrance to the park is located to the south from the A45 Coventry Road. There are further entrances available from the north, east, west and south-east. The western entrance is today only used as an agricultural track but was first noted on plans of 1780 and improved in the 18th century by John Wedge.

6.2.6 The setting of this estate includes those other estates in Warwickshire which had landscape influences from Sanderson Miller and from Lancelot Brown and therefore share an artistic link and are part of the canon of Lancelot Brown landscape designs.

The setting also includes the area in the surrounding landscape which is still in the ownership of the Aylesford family. This setting has been eroded by 20th century development which has diminished the ability to appreciate views outwards from the park. The significance of this asset is held within its historical, artistic, architectural and archaeological values. The association with Lancelot Brown and Sanderson Miller gives the park its architectural and artistic value. This is enhanced by the ability to compare with the work undertaken by both men in the Warwickshire area at the same time. The park has historical value through its initial association with Kenilworth Priory, then under ownership by the Fisher family and later, the Earls of Aylesford. Although a private residence, the park has the potential to contain valuable archaeological assets both relating to former park features and older features such as Packington Mill. The park remains largely intact, though some areas have been removed by the creation of a golf course in the north eastern portion of the park. The legibility and ability to understand this estate is well preserved.

6.3 Important hedgerows

6.3.1 One hedgerow that meets the archaeology and History criteria for importance as denoted in the 1997 Hedgerow Regulations Act has been identified within the study area.

6.3.2 Hedgerow (BIC089) forms a parish boundary, between the parishes of Chelmsley Wood and Bickenhill. It is located adjacent to junction 7/4 of the M42/M6.

7 Archaeological character

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 To determine the archaeological potential for the study area, it was sub-divided into archaeological character areas (ACA). These ACAs are derived from a consideration of the current topography, geology and current land use of the area. (see Maps CH-03-154, 154, L1 and 155a, Volume 5, Map Book cultural heritage). From these factors the potential for recovery of archaeological remains are considered.

7.1.2 From these broad character areas, the landscape was further subdivided into archaeological sub-zones (ASZ), which have allowed for a more in-depth understanding of the archaeological potential of the CFA. The study area has been sub-divided into 21 ASZs. Although initially defined and characterised by current land use, a number of additional factors have determined the potential of these sub-zones to contain archaeological remains of significance. These factors include topography, geology, historic character and distribution of known archaeological finds, sites and assets.

7.2 Character areas

7.2.1 The ACAs described below extend from east-west within the study area.

ACA001: Industrial extraction - River Blythe Valley

7.2.2 The study area lies within the valley of the River Blythe within an area formerly covered by the Forest of Arden. The geology of the area reflects its river valley location with the drift geology made up from alluvial sands and gravels. This has made the study area particularly attractive as a rich source of minerals. As such, much of the study area has been subjected to historic and current minerals extraction.

7.2.3 The area around Middle Bickenhill lies on the higher slopes at around 100m AOD; however, the archaeological potential in this area has been largely removed by quarrying, a pattern, a pattern repeated throughout the character area. The exception to this pattern is an area around Geary's Heath, in which historic mineral extraction took place, but where traces of a possible moat survive within a copse of trees. This indicates the possibility for rare survival of archaeology in those areas not subject to historic mineral extraction.

ACA002: Modern Development - west of M42

7.2.4 The character of the study area is very broadly divided by the route of the M42 which bisects the area from south-west to north-east. The area to the east is defined by large scale mineral extraction and vast formal parkland estates. The area to the west, and the subject of this character area, is the modern development of the NEC, Birmingham Business Park, the Elmdon trading estate and the modern settlement of Chelmsley Wood. The proximity of the character area to the outskirts of the city and the availability of good transport links has enabled the development of the area and the removal of archaeological potential.

ACA003: Rural pockets

7.2.5 These rural pockets are located at the northern part of the study area on the higher ground overlooking the River Blythe to the east and the River Cole to the north. All of the pockets of this character area are located at around 100m AOD. The characteristic of these areas of rural landscape is their survival. Within these areas, evidence of historic mineral extraction is evident, in particular around Brickfield Farm, as is evidence of the historically marshy and wooded nature of the entire study area. This can be seen in the area around Coleshill Pool, The Bogs Farm and Pool Wood.

7.2.6 LiDAR survey has identified features within these rural pockets which indicate a potential for the survival of archaeological deposits.

ACA004: Great Packington

7.2.7 This is the character area encompassing the Packington Estate. It extends beyond the boundary of the registered park area. The area is relatively flat, located within the valley of the River Blythe possibly within the floodplain. Packington Hall is located on slightly elevated ground at 95m AOD. The area encompasses the formal, designed elements of the parkland, the estate church and the few remaining estate farms. The line of the former Stonebridge railway runs through this character area, separating the parkland from the Packington landfill site to the north. There is the potential for the recovery of lost estate features and due to the lack of development within the estate boundary, there is potential for the recovery of archaeological features associated with the seasonal use of the riverbank. The LiDAR analysis has identified a number of features within this character area.

7.3 Archaeological sub-zones

7.3.1 The ASZs are presented in Table 2 from east-west within the study area. Plans showing the sub-zones can be found on Maps CH-03-154, CH-03-154-L1, CH-03-155a (Volume 5, Map Book cultural heritage).

Table 2: Archaeological sub-zones

No	Name	Topography	Geology/soils	Modern land use	Historic landscape character (HLC)	Archaeology
24-01	Glacio-fluvial deposits at Geary's Heath	Relatively flat at between 95-90m AOD	Mercia mudstone group overlain with glacio-fluvial deposits of sands and gravels	Recreational land and fishing lake	Fishery	Area of former mineral extraction turned into fishing lake. Possible LIDAR evidence of land drains. Very little archaeological potential
24-02	Moat site to west of Geary's Heath	Gentle slope from east 92m to west 80m AOD towards River Blythe	Mercia mudstone group overlain with glacial deposits, alluvial deposits and river terrace deposits of sands and gravels	Agricultural land	Large irregular fields and broad-leaved plantation	There is archaeological evidence on the form of a moat with a number of other features identified through LiDAR. Moats are a common feature in this landscape and the location on a high river terrace supports the interpretation
24-03	Sands and gravels east of Mill Farm	Slopes west from high point of 95m AOD	Mercia mudstone group overlain with glacio-fluvial deposits of sands and gravels	Agricultural land	Very large post-war fields, irregular	This area is partially located within the Packington Estate boundary. Some archaeological potential is noted through LiDAR but area is likely to have been used for agriculture within the estate for centuries
24-04	LiDAR results south of A45 Coventry Road	Flat, lying on the 100m AOD contour overlooking the River Blythe	Mercia mudstone group overlain with glacial deposits and alluvial deposits of sands and gravels	Agricultural land	Small irregular fields, paddocks, planned enclosure	LiDAR analysis has identified a possible moat feature in this area. Moats are a common feature in this landscape and the location on a high river terrace supports the interpretation
24-05	Road network including M42, A446 Stonebridge Road, M6 and A45 Coventry Road	Relatively flat and level throughout study area, at around 90-100m AOD	Mercia mudstone group overlain with glacial deposits and alluvial deposits of sands and gravels	Highway	Motorway	No Archaeological remains within this subzone. The road network began to grow within the mid-20th century. Potential from identification of older turnpike routes

No	Name	Topography	Geology/soils	Modern land use	Historic landscape character (HLC)	Archaeology
24-06	Park Hall Quarry	Gradual slope from 100mAOD in the southwest to 85m at Hollywell Brook, rising again to north-east to 100m AOD	Mercia mudstone group overlain with glacial deposits and alluvial deposits of sands and gravels	Mineral extraction site	Extraction	Formerly the site of the medieval and post-medieval settlements at Hill Bickenhill, now removed and quarried
24-07	Land to east of A452 Chester Road	Sloping from 95m to 85m AOD towards River Blythe	Mercia mudstone group overlain with glacial deposits and alluvial deposits of sands and gravels	Woodland and agriculture	Small irregular fields, broad leaved plantation	No archaeological remains found within this zone. Site overlooking the River Blythe offers the potential for palaeo-environmental remains
24-08	Packington Estate	Relatively flat valley bottom of the River Blythe 80mAOD	Mercia mudstone group overlain with glacial deposits, alluvial deposits and river terrace deposits of sands and gravels	Parkland estate and agricultural land	Parkland and post-war fields	Archaeological potential within the medieval deer park and for ornamental garden features. The Packington Estate was created in the 16th century with alterations from Lancelot Brown in the 18th century
24-09	Land around Church Farm	Gentle slope from north at 90m to south 85mAOD	Mercia mudstone group overlain with glacio-fluvial deposits of sands and gravels	Agricultural land and settlement	Paddocks, farm complex pre-1888, large rectilinear fields	The medieval town boundary of Little Packington is extant here and its location on the outskirts of the Packington Estate means there is the potential for further medieval archaeological to be recovered

No	Name	Topography	Geology/soils	Modern land use	Historic landscape character (HLC)	Archaeology
24-10	Sands and gravels west of Middle Bickenhill	Slightly sloping from 100m at the south west down to 85m AOD at Hollywell Brook, then sloping up to 100mAOD. South west part is on highest ground located overlooking River Blythe	Mercia mudstone group overlain with glacial deposits and alluvial deposits of sands and gravels	Agricultural land	Very Large Post-war Fields	This is an area located adjacent to the medieval settlement at Bickenhill and DMV of Hill Bickenhill. LiDAR has identified a number of features and the height and location of the area may indicate potential for prehistoric deposits, however the extent of forest in this area may preclude prehistoric activity.
24-11	Olympia Motorcycle Track	Flat, located at 95m AOD on platform overlooking the River Blythe	Mercia mudstone group overlain with glacial deposits and alluvial deposits of sands and gravels	Motorcycle track	Playing field, motorcycle track	This motorcycle track is located in an area of agricultural land and has been totally modified to provide a motorcycle track with undulations.
24-12	Area of former channel east of motorcycle track	Flat, located at 95m AOD on platform overlooking the River Blythe	Mercia mudstone group overlain with glacial deposits and alluvial deposits of sands and gravels	Woodland	Broad leaved Plantation	Possible former channel or moat arm located within woodland on edge of motorcycle park. Identified on LiDAR.
24-13	Industrial Development west of M42	Relatively flat, generally at 100m AOD	Mercia mudstone group overlain with glacial deposits and alluvial deposits of sands and gravels	Industrial, commercial and transport	Civic, Exhibition and Conference, Civil aviation, Airport, Water, Artificial Pond	Birmingham Airport was opened in 1939 and was requisitioned in WWII. The expansion of the airport began in 1960 with expansion continuing until the 2000s. The NEC was opened in 1976 with improvements and extensions including the addition of further car parks continued until 2009.
24-14	Packington Landfill	High mound of landfill itself within land at 95m AOD	Mercia mudstone group overlain with glacio-fluvial deposits of sands and gravels	Landfill	Industrial, waste tip	No potential for archaeology. Entirely removed by landfill operation.

No	Name	Topography	Geology/soils	Modern land use	Historic landscape character (HLC)	Archaeology
24-15	Land to south of Birmingham Business Park	Relatively flat at 100m AOD	Mercia mudstone group overlain with glacio-fluvial and glacio-lacustrine deposits of sands and gravels	Agricultural land	Planned enclosure	No archaeological features have been identified. Possible archaeological potential in the fields which have not been damaged by the construction of the business park.
24-16	Birmingham Business Park	Flat at 100m AOD	Mercia mudstone group overlain with glacio-lacustrine sands and gravels	Business park	Industrial	No potential for archaeology. Entirely removed through construction of the business park.
24-17	Wetlands and Gravels at Coleshill Pool	Flat, at 100m AOD on terrace overlooking River Blythe	Mercia mudstone group overlain with glacial deposits and alluvial deposits of sands and gravels	Woodland and water body	Broad-leaved plantation and water/marsh	Coleshill Pool is depicted on mapping from at least 1783 and may be a natural water body. There is archaeological potential in terms of the exploitation of the water body which is a potential focus of activity from the prehistoric period onward. There may be potential for palaeo-environmental deposits.
24-18	The Bogs	Relatively flat at 100mAOD	Mercia mudstone group overlain with glacio-fluvial deposits of sands and gravels	Woodland	Broad-leaved plantation	Archaeological evidence on the form of former marl pits.
24-19	Land around The Bogs Farm	Relatively flat at 100m AOD, marshy.	Mercia mudstone group overlain with glacio-fluvial deposits of sands and gravels	Agricultural land	Planned woodland clearance, planned enclosure	No archaeological features present but the area may once have been a deer park and there is the potential for features relating to this to be recovered.
24-20	Birmingham Airport	Relatively flat, on higher ground at 110-100m AOD	Mercia mudstone group overlain with glacio-fluvial deposits of sands and gravels	Airport	Civil airport	Potential for archaeology to be recovered in undisturbed areas of airfield and for possible WWI and WWII structures.

No	Name	Topography	Geology/soils	Modern land use	Historic landscape character (HLC)	Archaeology
24-21	Clays, gravels and heath-land west of Coleshill Pool	Relatively flat, at highest point 105m AOD overlooking River Blythe	Mercia mudstone group overlain with glacial deposits and alluvial deposits of sands and gravels	Agricultural land	Large rectilinear fields, planned enclosure	Area of clays and silts south of the Cole Valley. Brick kilns noted on historic mapping and Brickfield Farm is still extant within this. Historically the area was heath land divided into large land parcels.

8 Analysis and research potential

8.1 Analysis of understanding

8.1.1 The baseline report has identified that evidence for early and later prehistoric activity is represented by artefacts such as flint blades and pottery that have been located during mineral extraction and from river terraces. Evidence for Bronze Age occupation within the study area is sparse and artefact finds are limited to a single axe head. This lack of evidence is despite the study area being located within a river valley where settlement activity is usually to be expected.

8.1.2 Iron Age activity is represented by enclosed settlements and hillforts within the region which have been identified from aerial photography, although there is no evidence of this within the study area.

8.1.3 During the Romano-British period the study area was bounded by military roads, including Watling Street which was a major military artery connecting the Kent coast with the legionary fortress in North Wales, including other military establishments along its route. Other military features included the Metchley Roman Fort and the vexilation fort at Mancetter as well as the 'The Lunt' in Coventry.

8.1.4 Civilian activity included the settlement at Mancetter and Alcester and the salt industry at Droitwich which is assumed to have given its name to the Salt Way, used for the transportation of salt produced there.

8.1.5 Despite the presence of these roads there is no evidence for Romano-British occupation within the study area.

8.1.6 Evidence for early medieval occupation is provided by place name evidence, for example Packington being derived from 'Paca's farm/settlement'. It has been suggested that the settlement at Hill Bickenhill that may have been known as Bichehelle, was extant during this period. At the time of Domesday two settlements are referred to as Bickenhill; there is some debate as to the precise location of these settlements and the 6th century date for the settlement is not proven.

8.1.7 During the medieval period a number of settlements are present, which may have their origins in the early medieval period, as outlined above. Within the study area substantial estates were present, for example the Manor of Packington which was part of the holdings of the Augustinian Priory of Kenilworth. Extensive areas of woodland were present at this time which were utilised as an economic resource. The extent of woodland is illustrated by Coleshill Manor of which approximately 4,370ha were under woodland and 146ha were in arable cultivation. With the expansion of the settlements during the medieval period there was an increase in pressure for land as a result of increased demand for land to be brought into productive cultivation. This lead to some settlements having insufficient land to meet their requirements for common pasture.

8.1.8 With the increased political stability during the medieval period there was a marked increase in the number of moated sites as opposed to earthwork castles, which in turn were replaced by timber framed farms or stone mansions. These structures are common features of the study area. This also led to the establishment of significant

country houses with associated estates, such as that at Packington, which continued to grow and develop with formal designed gardens and landscape through to the 19th century.

8.1.9 Increased growth in the trade of manufactured goods during the 16th century stimulated the development of settlements to service the increased demand for goods utilising local raw materials. It was also during this period that major changes in land ownership took place with the Dissolution of the Monasteries and the collapse of 'old nobility'. These changes lead to an influx of new landed families and the establishment of patterns of land ownership which lasted into the 19th century.

8.1.10 The enclosure of waste and heathland during the 19th century saw a transformation from firstly pasture for cattle to extensive wheat production. It was also at this time with the development of agricultural practises that much of the heathland was improved and water meadows drained and brought into productive use. Produce derived from these improvements serviced not only the local market but was also used to supply Coventry and Birmingham.

8.1.11 Much of the rural character of the study area was maintained throughout the 19th century, in part as a result of the interests of the landed estates, but also by population influx of individuals wishing to escape the industrial sprawl of Birmingham and Coventry. These richer individuals purchased tracts of land which were then free from development in the future, helping to maintain the field patterns of the post-medieval period and the general agricultural character of this landscape.

8.1.12 The need for improved in transportation was answered by the introduction of new turnpike roads and coaching stages that further helped to support and develop the towns which they linked. Further development in the transport infrastructure within the study area included the construction of the railways which competed to connect the rapidly developing industrial centres of Birmingham and Coventry with London and other metropolitan areas. The railways transformed many settlements and led to further expansion.

8.1.13 During the 20th century the study area experienced significant change and urbanisation. This included the provision of a rehabilitation facility for former World War I servicemen at Elmdon Road. The site of this facility was redeveloped and used for the production of 'Stirling Bombers' during World War II. The war was the trigger for extensive local initiatives to support the war effort, particularly the fear of invasion. This is illustrated by the anti-glider ditches dug at Marston Green, although the nearby Elmdon Airport is more likely to have been .an intended target than Marston Green.

8.1.14 Following its function as a military air base during World War II, Elmdon Airport was redeveloped following civilian operation and continued to experience several phases of growth and development leading to its current status as Birmingham Airport. A similar story of expansion and development took place with the NEC. The present range of buildings replaced an earlier complex of buildings, both of which were intended for utilisation as exhibition centres.

8.1.15 Following the extensive bombing that Birmingham experienced during World War II planned programmes of urban renewal were implemented, which included the construction of over 50,000 homes at Chelmsley Wood.

8.1.16 During the post-war years, the transport infrastructure was also significantly upgraded and improved. This included the construction of the M42 and the M6 as well as a number of local roads of various classifications which contribute to much of the present day character of the study area.

8.1.17 Within the study area the dominant features of the landscape are associated with 20th century infrastructure development and extractive industries from earlier periods. Whilst this activity has resulted in extensive disruption and destruction of archaeological assets, within those areas that have not experienced such development, there remains the potential to contain evidence of multi-period occupation.

8.1.18 Within river valleys there is the potential for the survival of palaeo-environmental indicators that, if present, have the potential to provide valuable data relating to past environmental conditions and human interaction with the landscape.

8.2 Research potential and priorities

8.2.1 The research potential and priorities are considered on a chronological basis.

General

- what can be learnt from the study of palaeo-environmental deposits and sequences that may provide further clarification and understanding of the nature of the landscape and human interaction with it through time?

Early prehistory

- there is a paucity of evidence from the prehistoric period; to what extent is this true reflection of occupation within, and utilisation of, the landscape?

Romano-British

- despite significant military establishments and associated infrastructure, including civilian occupation there is a paucity of data from the Roman period within the study area. Is this a true reflection of the nature of activity and can further clarification be gained?

Early Medieval

- to what extent can the nature of early medieval occupation be clarified and further detail gained as to the extent and nature of utilisation of the landscape during this period?

Medieval

- what can be learnt of the medieval utilisation and arrangement of the landscape to provide a greater level of detail than is already understood from extant documentary sources and field surveys?
- what can further study of the moated sites in the study area tell us about regional variations in form, function and location?

- could further study of the moated sites provide information on social structure in the medieval period, including the layout of settlements?
- to what extent is the presence of ridge and furrow within the study area creating a false representation of the nature and extent of occupation from earlier periods?

Post-medieval

- what can the study of the move from small-scale mineral extraction to large-scale quarrying tell us about the rise of industrialisation in the rural fringes of Birmingham?
- to what extent can the rise in transport networks in the study area be linked to the evolution and survival of settlements?
- further study of the development of Birmingham Airport and its use as a military and civilian installation could provide information on military aviation technology and architecture and early aviation architecture.

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